

## Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 131136

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PN, PFOR

SUBJECT: PROBLEMATIC POSITION OF FOREIGN MINISTER TACK

FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM BELL

1. ON RETURNING TO WASHINGTON JUNE 3 GONZALEZ-REVILLA RAISED "THE TACK PROBLEM" AND SOUGHT -- AT TORRIJOS' REQUEST -- THE NEGOTIATORS' "FRANK, CONFIDENTIAL VIEWS".
2. AS BEST TORRIJOS AND HIS CONFIDANTS CAN MAKE OUT, TACK IS ENGAGED IN SOME SORT OF A POWER PLAY. HE HAS ISOLATED HIMSELF FROM TORRIJOS AND THE "SECRET GROUP", DECLINING TO BRIEF THE GENERAL ON THE OASGA PROCEEDINGS, ABSENTING HIMSELF FROM CABINET MEETINGS, SPREADING WORD (THROUGH WIFE ANAYANSI) THAT HE IS RESIGNING AND THAT HE BELIEVES HE IS UNDER HOUSE ARREST.
3. BUT THE PURPOSE OF THE POWER PLAY ESCAPES TORRIJOS, FOR NEITHER DIRECTLY NOR INDIRECTLY HAS TACK MADE KNOWN ANY DEMANDS. (WE CAN SPECULATE THAT HE IS UNHAPPY AT HAVING TO CONSULT WITH THE "SECRET GROUP" ON NEGOTIATIONS CONFIDENTIAL

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RATHER THAN, AS FORMERLY, CONDUCTING THEM WHOLLY BY HIMSELF.)

4. DURING OUR CONVERSATION RAQUEL TORRIJOS INTERJECTED

THAT THE REAL ANSWER IS THAT THE MAN IS CLEARLY MAD.

5. AS FOR THE "NEGOTIATORS' VIEWS", I SAID THAT WHILE WE WOULD OF COURSE BE HAPPY TO NEGOTIATE WITH WHOMEVER PANAMA CHOSE, AND WHILE THIS IS OBVIOUSLY NONE OF OUR BUSINESS, WE COULD NOT HELP BUT REGRET ANY CHANGE IN "THE NEGOTIATING CIRCUMSTANCES", SINCE THE EXISTING ONES HAD WORKED SO VERY WELL AND GAVE EVERY PROSPECT OF CONTINUING TO DO SO. GONZALEZ-REVILLA SAID TORRIJOS FELT MUCH THE SAME WAY, BUT WAS NOW UNDER PRESSURE FROM MANY SIDES TO JETTISON TACK AND TACK WAS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE, IT SEEMED, TO JUSTIFY THOSE PRESSURES.

6. GONZALEZ THEN TELEPHONED TORRIJOS, AND AFTER TALKING AROUND THE SUBJECT FOR SOME TIME A CONSENSUS SEEMED TO EMERGE THAT TACK SHOULD BE KEPT IN PLACE AT LEAST UNTIL THE END OF THE NEXT NEGOTIATING ROUND, WHICH SHOULD SERVE AS A TEST OF TACK'S INTENTIONS -- AND, IN FACT, MOTIVATIONS. (FYI, HE SAID TO ME PRIVATELY WHILE HERE FOR THE OASGA THAT HE WAS HAVING SOME SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE "VALIDITY" OF THE REVOLUTION.)

7. EXPERIENCE WITH TACK SINCE MID-1972 LEADS ME TO THINK HE MAY SIMPLY BE IN ONE OF HIS PERIODIC SULKS, INTENSIFIED BY ANAYANSI'S ALWAYS UNHELPFUL INFLUENCE.

8. IN ANY CASE WE WOULD HOPE HE COULD REMAIN, AT LEAST AS CHIEF NEGOTIATOR, THROUGH THE NEXT ROUND, WHICH WILL BE DIFFICULT ENOUGH WITHOUT THE INTERPOSITION OF A NEW PERSONALITY. KISSINGER

CONFIDENTIAL

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